

Abstracts/ECIM 2011/Poster Presentations/MIND BODY MEDICINE

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Getting started with Taiji – exploring beginners' expectations towards Taiji

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Background: As reported in various clinical trials patients' expectations have been shown to possess a high influence on treatment results. However, by now little attention has been drawn on subjective expectations in preventive interventions such as Taiji. Taiji is a mind-body practice characterized by sequences of gentle and mindful body movements. It has repeatedly been considered as a valuable intervention for stress management. The aim of our study was to evaluate what beginners without previous practical Taiji experience expect from this mind-body practice in general as well as more specifically with regard to stress management.

Materials and Methods: 74 healthy subjects (22 male and 52 female; mean age = 35.4; SD = \pm 7.5) applied for a Taiji beginners course (2 x 1h per week for 3 months) and were asked to write down their expectations towards their upcoming Taiji course. Additionally stress management related expectations were measured by rating 15 expectations on a Likert-scale (six-point rating scale ranging from 1 = "not true at all" to 6 = "absolutely true") to indicate the degree of correspondence with their own expectations. Descriptive data analysis was employed. Associations between socio-demographic factors and stress management related expectations were analysed by using between group t-Tests.

Results: The expectation most mentioned was "get to know Taiji" (n = 42), followed by "tranquillity and peace of mind" (n = 33), "improved handling of stress" (n = 30), "increased body awareness" (n = 26) and "relaxation" (n = 20). Moderate average expectation values were found regarding Taiji related stress reduction (M = 4.44; SD = \pm 0.96) and resource activation (M = 4.58; SD = \pm 0.68). Subjects without a high-school degree (n = 17) expected a significantly higher stress reduction through Taiji (M = 4.89; SD = \pm 0.77) than those with a higher education level (n = 57; M = 4.30; SD = \pm 0.98; p < .05).

Conclusion: Beginners who are getting started with Taiji mainly expressed knowledge related and mind-body related expectations. Stress reductive expectations were more often mentioned by subjects with less favourable educational background. The consideration of participants' expectations in future Taiji studies warrants further attention.

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Flow experience during Taiji practice – an observational study in healthy subjects

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